

JLab Injury History FY2009-2010

We have a very good injury record at Jefferson Lab. Folks plan their work so as to minimize the risk of injury. In Fiscal Year 2009 we did not have a single injury that resulted in lost or restricted time. Since October, however, we've had 3 such injuries. A small number considering all the work that we do, but still 3 too many. In each case we have investigated the event and determined what we can do to avoid that incident from recurring

Recently I took a step back and looked at all of the more serious injuries that have occurred over the last 19 months to see what could be learned.

Date	Injury	Causal Factor
1/5/2009	Subcontractor employee in the CC kitchen received a 1st degree burn to their hand when they accidentally touched a cooking surface.	Situational Awareness /LTA supervision – employee had returned from X-mas break and it was her last workday before retiring.
7/13/2009	Employee was stung twice by a yellow jacket.	Environment
7/16/2009	Employee was struck in eye by insect while walking past the first of two AC blower units.	Environment Design of AC compressor unit
11/19/2009	Employee was testing a circuit board when the 15v regulator (IC chip) exploded and a piece of the plastic hit him in his left eye	Work Planning – determination of PPE requirements Design of equipment
1/22/2010	Employee was moving cinder blocks with gloves on, one of the blocks slipped and pinched his left ring finger between another cinder block	Work Planning - Manual handling, the large quantity of blocks (1000+) presented many opportunities for a dropped block and the resultant risks – pinch/crush injury.
3/15/2010	Subcontractor employee was undoing the straps around equipment when the pieces shifted and pushed against his foot this caused him to jump off ledge, fracturing ankle.	Work Planning Situational Awareness
4/13/2010	Employee was leaning into a cavity bake oven to inspect a fitting at the bottom of the cabinet's interior, and hit his head on the shelf.	Situational Awareness Design
4/28/2010	User brushed his forearm against a piece of wood and received a splinter. He removed it and went back to work. By the next day the wound had become infected	Situational Awareness

There have been 8 recordable injuries (requiring treatment beyond first aid) in the last 19 months. In 3 of them work planning was determined as the primary cause. In 3 cases, situational awareness was determined to be the cause.

Human performance studies report that on average people make five mistakes an hour. A job plan, attention to detail and stopping to think about the consequences of your task and those around you can help minimize your risk and chance of making mistakes. Here are some things to keep in mind as you plan your work.

1. Walk down the work site as you plan and before you start work.

Lack of attentiveness or situational awareness is a factor common to most incidents. Walking the job site before starting work will help heighten your awareness of your work environment.

2. What can go wrong?

Think through your work processes and break them into components. Identify what could go wrong with each step and take appropriate precautions.

3. Is there better/safer way to perform the job?

Often during the investigation, someone will state. "We've been doing the job this way for 10 years." Ten years later, new techniques or tools may be available. Do you have the best tools for the job? Watch out for make-shift and non-specialized cutting tools. Make sure you are using tools in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the laboratory's safety requirements.

4. Are there other concerns that can affect your ability to work safely?

Other things may have changed in 10 years. Advancing age, as well as pre-existing or incipient health conditions, can adversely impact your ability to work. Stay in touch with the Medical Department to help keep your fitness level in sync with your work requirements. Plan work breaks for repetitive tasks.

Be conscious of things that can affect your attentiveness level: illness, medications, a mental workload that is too low and boring or too high and stressful. Talk to your supervisor and try to put off jobs until you can focus fully or break jobs into smaller segments to avoid mental or physical fatigue.

5. What if an injury occurs?

Promptly report to the Medical Department if your work causes discomfort. Putting up with pain for months or years could result in a permanent condition or the need for surgery. Usually, a few simple adjustments to your work processes will take care of the problem.